

hyre<sup>o</sup>  
re:Imagine'26

LET'S SHAPE THE FUTURE OF RECRUITING

# STRATEGIC INSIGHTS REPORT

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# Executive Summary



## Reimagining Talent & Recruiting in the Age of AI

Talent acquisition is entering a structural inflection point. Rapid advances in artificial intelligence, evolving workforce expectations, and the increasing strategic importance of talent are forcing organizations to rethink how hiring systems are designed and operated.

Across industries, traditional recruitment models — built around manual processes, fragmented tools, and reactive hiring — are proving inadequate in an environment where speed, precision, and candidate experience directly influence business outcomes. AI is now enabling organizations to transition toward intelligence-driven hiring architectures, where sourcing, evaluation, engagement, and onboarding are increasingly supported by autonomous systems, predictive insights, and data-driven decision frameworks.

Against this backdrop, **Hyreo re:Imagine '26** convened industry leaders to examine the practical implications of these shifts and explore how talent acquisition functions must evolve to remain competitive. Discussions throughout the event & solution presentations from its pre-event—HyreoLabs Thinkathon, highlighted a fundamental transition: hiring is moving from an **operational HR function to a strategic capability that directly influences organizational growth, innovation capacity, and global competitiveness.**

# Strategic Insights

## 10 Key Takeaways from re:Imagine '26

Drawing from the Thinkathon deliberations, keynote perspectives, and multi-industry panel discussions, re:Imagine '26 surfaced ten defining insights shaping the next era of talent strategy:

### **Talent Has Moved from Operational Metric to Strategic Growth Lever**

Across discussions, one theme was unmistakable: talent is now a board-level growth driver. The conversation has shifted from “time-to-fill” to workforce capability, productivity impact, and long-term value creation.

### **AI Adoption Requires Workflow Redesign — Not Just Automation**

Leaders emphasized that simply layering AI onto legacy processes delivers limited ROI. Meaningful transformation demands rethinking sourcing, screening, engagement, and onboarding architectures end-to-end.

### **Capability Over Capacity Is the New Mandate**

Scale alone is insufficient. Organizations are prioritizing deep domain capability, cross-functional thinking, and leadership readiness over headcount expansion.

### **Recruiters Must Evolve into Strategic Talent Partners**

The future recruiter operates as a business advisor — influencing workforce planning, skills architecture, compensation thinking, and location strategy — rather than functioning as a transactional executor.

### **GCCs Are Transitioning from Execution Hubs to Innovation Engines**

Global Capability Centers are increasingly expected to own end-to-end charters, ship globally relevant products, and act as strategic counterparts to headquarters.

### **Domain + Technology + Business Acumen Is the Winning Intersection**

High-impact talent sits at the crossroads of industry expertise, digital fluency, and decision-making capability. Intersectional (X-shaped) capability is emerging as a defining differentiator.

### **Capability Over Pedigree**

Panels reinforced that cognitive ability, systems thinking, adaptability, and leadership potential are stronger long-term predictors than institutional pedigree or narrow skill labels.

### **Candidate Experience Is a Conversion Multiplier**

Structured transparency, real-time communication, and integrated engagement across the hiring lifecycle are essential to reducing drop-offs and strengthening employer credibility.

### **Predictable Onboarding Drives Early Productivity**

A milestone-driven 30–60–90 day architecture, cross-functional ownership clarity, and proactive engagement significantly reduce early attrition and accelerate integration.

### **Ecosystem Collaboration Is Critical to Sustainable Talent Pipelines**

Enterprises, academia, technology providers, and community platforms must co-create future-ready talent pathways — particularly through Tier 2/3 partnerships, apprenticeship models, and cognitive-focused assessments.

# Event Overview

**Hyreo re:Imagine '26** was designed as a curated industry forum focused on advancing dialogue around AI-enabled hiring models and workforce transformation. The conference convened enterprise leaders, talent acquisition practitioners, technology experts, and ecosystem partners to examine how organizations are redesigning talent strategies in response to rapid advancements in artificial intelligence and evolving workforce expectations.

A distinctive element of the event was its two-stage format, integrating collaborative ideation with industry dialogue.



## Event Structure

re:Imagine '26 was designed as a two-stage event combining collaborative problem-solving with industry-led discussion. The HyreoLabs Thinkathon (January 29) brought together curated participant groups to work on structured challenges across the hiring lifecycle, including sourcing models, next-generation shortlisting and interviewing frameworks, candidate experience design, and onboarding predictability. The solution frameworks developed during this session were later presented at the Main Conference (February 12), where industry leaders evaluated and built upon practitioner-led ideas.

The conference agenda moved from broader industry context to applied insight, with keynote sessions, expert presentations, and panel discussions focused on evolving hiring models. Thinkathon solution showcases formed a key part of the program, ensuring the event went beyond thought leadership to deliver actionable frameworks for the future of recruiting. Rather than a conventional conference, re:Imagine '26 was positioned as a platform for aligning industry stakeholders on the future architecture of hiring.

# Participation Snapshot

## Scale of Engagement



**20+**

Speakers and Moderators



**200+**

Attendees



**35+**

Thinkathon Participants



## Audience Composition

The event attracted a cross-functional audience representing multiple stakeholder groups within the talent ecosystem, including:

- Talent Acquisition leadership
- HR strategy and operations professionals
- Enterprise technology and transformation teams
- Founders and business leaders
- Global Capability Center (GCC) and workforce strategy stakeholders

Participating organizations spanned consulting firms, technology enterprises, GCCs, and HR technology providers, enabling multi-perspective discussion across both strategic and operational dimensions of hiring.

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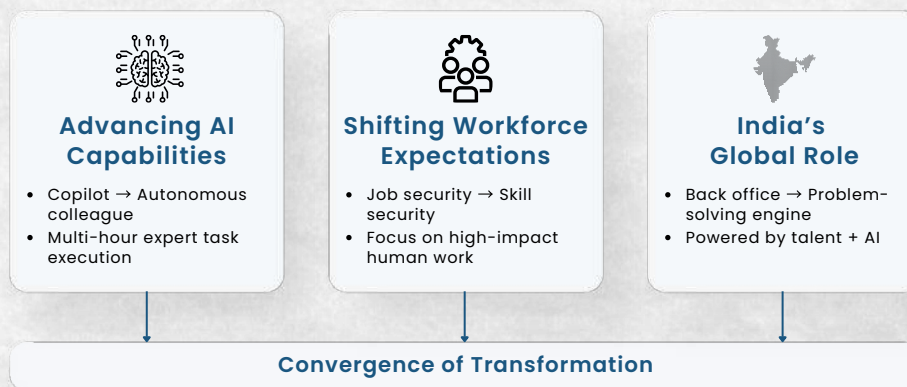
*The line-up of all the events was really very well architected – the layering of the keynote speech, the independent sessions and even the panel discussions. The topics were very well distributed.”*

**Rajesh Mishra,**  
Partner, KPMG

# Opening Session Highlights

## Setting the Context: The Changing Landscape of Talent & AI

The session highlighted how talent acquisition is being reshaped by the convergence of three structural forces: rapidly advancing artificial intelligence capabilities, shifting workforce expectations, and India's expanding role in the global talent economy. These dynamics are redefining how organizations think about workforce strategy, hiring architecture, and long-term capability building.



A key theme discussed was India's emerging strategic position in the global workforce ecosystem. With a young and increasingly AI-aware talent base, combined with the continued expansion of Global Capability Centers (GCCs), the opportunity for India to evolve from cost-driven service models to capability-led talent ecosystems was emphasized. This transition requires organizations to rethink how they source, evaluate, and develop talent in a technology-augmented environment.

The discussion also positioned AI as a structural force within enterprise operations, rather than simply a productivity tool. AI is increasingly influencing workforce design, decision-making frameworks, and operational models across organizations. As a result, talent functions must adapt hiring processes to integrate machine intelligence while preserving human judgment in critical evaluation stages.

Speakers further highlighted that many of the challenges discussed during the conference are already visible in current hiring environments. Talent teams are managing growing application volumes, signal overload, evolving skill validation methods, and rising candidate expectations. Addressing these pressures will require organizations to move toward more intelligent, signal-driven hiring frameworks that balance automation with governance and human oversight.

# Keynote Addresses

## 1. India's Goldilocks Opportunity

**Avantika Susan Nigam** 

Chief People Officer,  
ACT Fibernet

The session introduced the concept of **India's "Goldilocks opportunity"** – a rare convergence of demographic strength, digital maturity, and accelerating AI adoption positioning the country uniquely within the global economic landscape. Drawing from the economic idea of conditions being “not too hot, not too cold, but just right,” **Avantika Susan Nigam** described how geopolitical shifts, aging workforces in developed economies, supply chain realignments, and rapid technological change are collectively creating a strategic window for India.

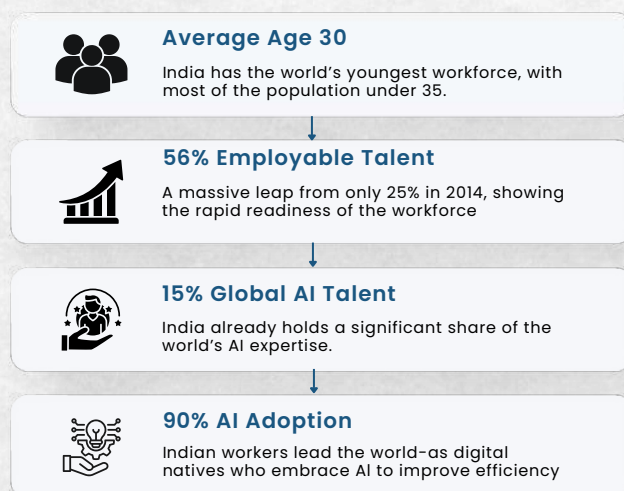


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*“We are in a Goldilocks phase – not too hot, not too cold, but just right. We have scale, we have talent, and 15% of the world’s AI talent sits in India. AI gives us leverage to reset our global position. But this window won’t stay forever – those who think globally, act decisively, and redesign early will win.”*

With one of the world’s youngest populations, expanding digital public infrastructure, rising employability indicators, and strong early adoption of AI tools, India has the potential to move beyond its historic role as the “back office of the world” toward becoming a **global problem-solving and innovation hub**.

The discussion addressed concerns around AI-driven job displacement, emphasizing the need to focus on **skill security** through continuous capability development. Frameworks such as **automate, augment, accelerate, and create** were highlighted as practical approaches to redesign work and integrate AI effectively.



The session ultimately positioned the current moment as both an opportunity and a strategic imperative. While structural advantages exist, realizing this potential will require coordinated action across **education systems, enterprises, policymakers, and individual professionals**. The “Goldilocks” window, as emphasized during the discussion, represents a time-sensitive opportunity that must be actively leveraged.

The poster has a dark blue background. On the left, there is a logo with a white 'E' in a blue circle, followed by the text 're:Imagine '26' and 'LET'S SHAPE THE FUTURE OF RECRUITING'. Below this is the main title 'India's Goldilocks Opportunity' in large white font, with a red YouTube play button icon to its right. Underneath the title is the name 'Avantika Susan Nigam' and her title 'Chief People Officer, ACT FIBERNET'. At the bottom left, the date '12 FEBRUARY 2026' and location 'HOTEL ROYAL ORCHID, DOMLUR, BENGALURU' are listed. On the right side, there is a portrait of Avantika Susan Nigam, a woman with dark hair, smiling. In the top right corner, there is a 'Copy link' button with a link icon.

## 2. AI as Your Next Colleague

**Prasanna Krishnamurthy** 

Managing Partner, Upekkha

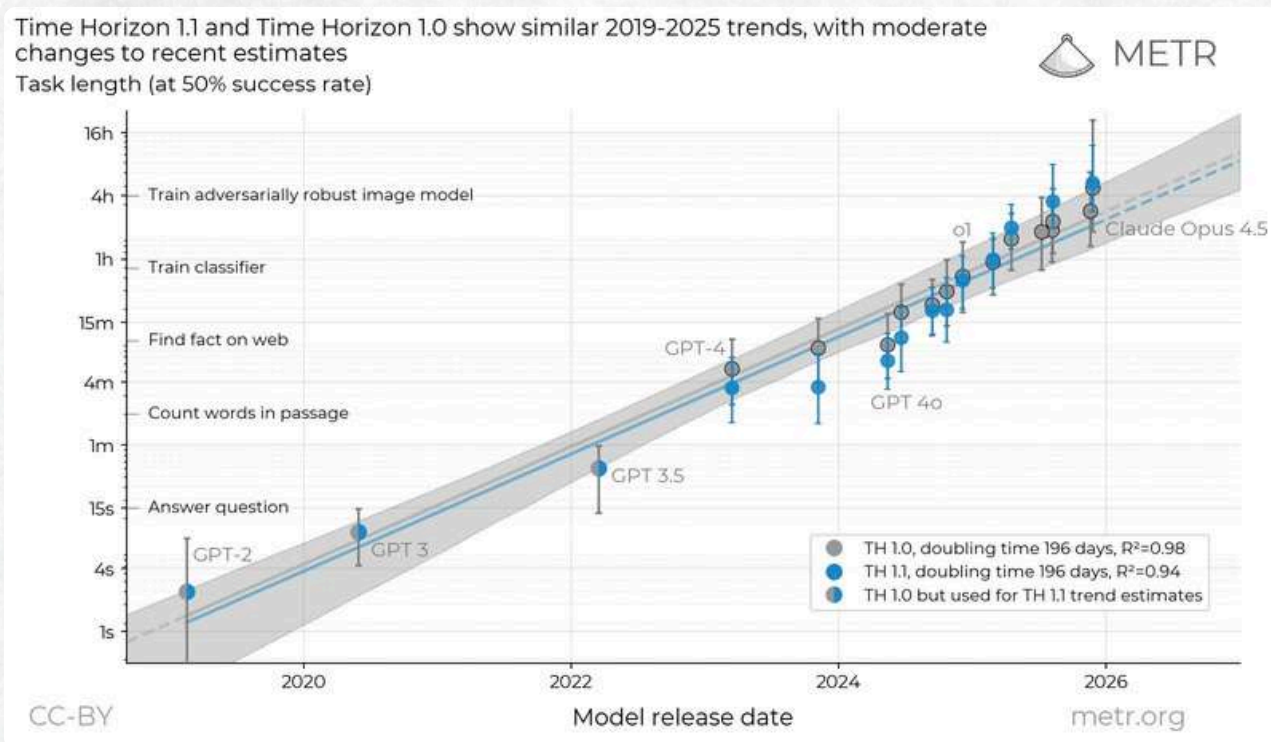
The session examined the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence from a productivity copilot to an autonomous operational participant capable of executing complex, expert-level tasks. Prasanna Krishnamurthy highlighted how recent advances in AI models have significantly expanded the scope of machine-led work, enabling systems to handle increasingly complex knowledge-work assignments with higher accuracy and autonomy. Examples discussed during the session illustrated the scale of this shift. Organizations have reported scenarios where workforce size reduced by nearly 25% while revenue increased by a similar margin.



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*“AI is already outperforming experts on 60% of complex knowledge tasks and can autonomously execute multi-hour assignments at expert level. If your next colleague is an AI, how prepared are you to rethink roles, performance systems, and workforce design?”*

The discussion emphasized that the conversation around AI is no longer limited to entry-level automation. Instead, enterprises must prepare for a structural shift in which AI augments – and in some cases surpasses – highly specialized professional work.



Leaders were encouraged to rethink workforce design in this context, including span of control, performance management frameworks, and organizational architecture. As AI systems increasingly function as operational collaborators, HR and business leaders will need to adapt talent strategies to manage hybrid human-AI work environments.

**E** AI Is Your Next Colleague | Prasanna Krishnamoorthy | Hyreo re:Imagi... Copy link

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**Your Next Colleague  
is Going to be an AI**

Prasanna Krishnamoorthy  
Managing Partner - Upekkha

**12 FEBRUARY 2026**  
HOTEL ROYAL ORCHID, DOMLUR, BENGALURU

### 3. The Great Recruiting Paradox: Solving for Plenty and Scarcity

**Arun Satyan** 

Founder & CEO, Hyreo

The session examined the structural contradictions shaping modern talent acquisition. **Arun Satyan** described a hiring ecosystem that is simultaneously overwhelmed with applicant data and digital signals, yet constrained by scarcity – of attention, time, recruiter bandwidth, and actionable insight. While organizations may receive hundreds of applications per role, the ability to extract meaningful intelligence from that volume remains limited.



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*“We are obese with data but starved for actionable insight. We are buried under the haystack. The real challenge is not talent – it’s attention, time, and intelligence.”*

Tracing the evolution of recruiting technology – from early job boards to ATS platforms, CRM systems, and emerging agentic AI – the discussion highlighted how decades of digitization solved discoverability but unintentionally created excess. The result is a hiring architecture characterized by high application volume, fragmented tools, and largely reactive workflows.

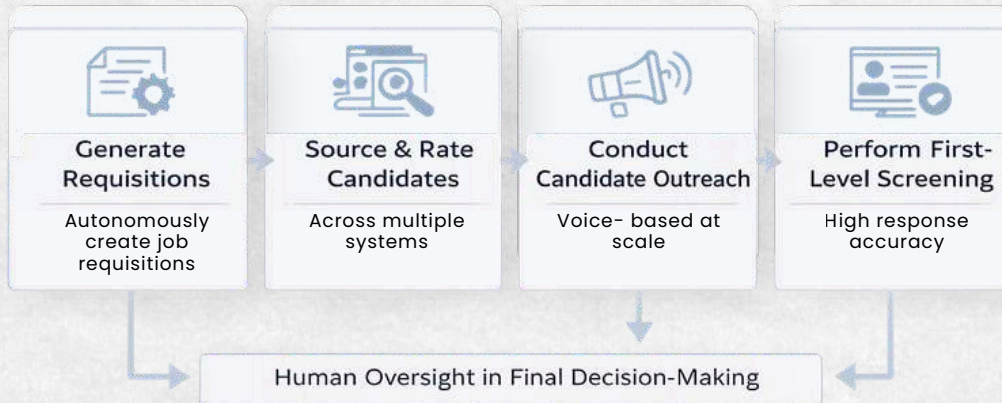
The paradox was framed across two operational dimensions:

#### **Solving for Plenty**

Organizations must move beyond keyword-based screening and “rationing mindsets” toward orchestration models where AI evaluates entire applicant pools using contextual signals – including career progression, skill adjacency, and demonstrated impact.

## Solving for Scarcity

Equally critical is reclaiming recruiter attention and decision bandwidth. AI-enabled conversational agents, predictive candidate intent analysis, and cross-system intelligence can automate early engagement and screening while surfacing actionable insights for recruiters.



AI-driven recruiting workflows can now autonomously generate requisitions, source and rate candidates across systems, conduct voice-based outreach at scale, and perform first-level screening with high accuracy—significantly compressing hiring timelines while keeping humans in the final decision loop. This shift reframes the recruiter’s role from system operator and filter to contextual decision-maker, enabling organizations to move beyond managing volume and instead address the structural scarcity of recruiter capacity with faster, more intelligent hiring systems.

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**The TA Paradox: Solving for plenty, winning through scarcity**

Arun Satyan  
Founder & CEO, Hyreo

**12 FEBRUARY 2026**  
HOTEL ROYAL ORCHID, DOMLUR, BENGALURU

## 4. AI adoption in Enterprise – Compliances and Governance

Sunu Engineer 

Technology Leader & AI Governance Expert | Advisor to Hyreo

Joining virtually from Germany, Sunu Engineer offered a global perspective on the rapidly evolving landscape of AI governance, regulatory accountability, and enterprise compliance.

The session highlighted how emerging regulatory frameworks – including the EU AI Act, the Cyber Resilience Act, and evolving digital regulations in India – are significantly expanding the compliance obligations of organizations.

Responsibility is increasingly moving beyond legal and compliance teams to executive leadership and boards, particularly in areas such as cybersecurity resilience, AI deployment, and digital risk governance.



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*“Compliance is no longer a legal afterthought. It is becoming a technology design problem.”*

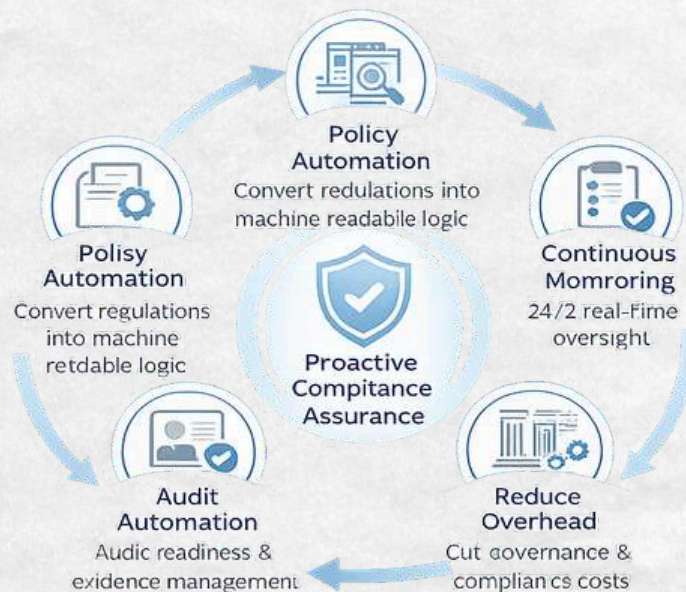
A central theme was the transition from traditional compliance models toward **“compliance by design.”** As enterprises deploy AI across products, processes, and decision systems, governance can no longer rely on manual documentation, periodic audits, or reactive enforcement. Instead, compliance must be embedded directly into enterprise technology architectures.

AI-enabled compliance systems can support this shift by enabling:

- Conversion of regulatory policies into structured, machine-readable logic
- Continuous monitoring instead of periodic or sample-based audits
- Automated audit readiness and evidence management
- Significant reductions in governance and compliance overhead
- Predictive detection of potential compliance failures

For HR leaders, these capabilities have direct implications across hiring governance, bias mitigation, DEI adherence, labor law compliance, and secure whistleblower management. Properly implemented AI systems can strengthen transparency, consistency, and responsiveness across HR processes.

The discussion also acknowledged emerging societal and regulatory concerns – including digital safety and harmful content management – signaling that global oversight of AI systems is likely to intensify.



The session concluded with a clear message: **in an AI-driven enterprise environment, compliance must evolve from a reactive function into an intelligent, continuous layer embedded within the operating model.**

# HyreoLabs Thinkathon

## Discuss. Debate. Disrupt.

As organizations navigate accelerating AI adoption and increasing complexity in talent acquisition, many of the challenges in hiring today require deeper, solution-oriented exploration. The **HyreoLabs Thinkathon** was designed to address this need – creating a structured working forum where practitioners could collaboratively examine persistent hiring challenges and develop practical solution frameworks.

Held on **January 29 in Bengaluru**, the Thinkathon brought together curated cohorts of talent leaders, practitioners, and technology specialists to engage in focused problem-solving across key stages of the hiring lifecycle. Unlike traditional conference discussions, the format prioritized **collaboration, practitioner insight, and implementation thinking**, enabling participants to move beyond theory and explore operational models that could realistically be adopted within enterprise environments.

Distinct from traditional conference panels, the Thinkathon emphasized **structured inquiry and tangible outcomes**. The working sessions were designed around:

- **Root-cause analysis** of persistent hiring challenges
- **Facilitated debate and collaborative working boards** to test ideas
- **Framework-driven solution articulation** rather than open discussion
- **Enterprise-focused implementation pathways** to ensure practical relevance

Each cohort examined a structural challenge within modern hiring ecosystems – ranging from candidate sourcing and signal evaluation to candidate experience and onboarding predictability. Participants were encouraged to diagnose systemic constraints and propose scalable approaches that could improve **signal quality, hiring efficiency, decision confidence, and candidate trust**.

The solution frameworks developed during the Thinkathon were later presented during the re:Imagine '26 main conference, where they were evaluated by an industry jury and discussed with the broader audience. This approach ensured continuity between collaborative ideation and industry dialogue, positioning the Thinkathon as a foundational layer for the conversations that followed throughout the event.

# Thinkathon Solution Presentations

## 1. Next-Gen Talent Shortlisting & Interviewing Models (Winning Team)



Click here to watch!

Moderated by:

**Vishwanadh Raju** 

CEO and Co-Founder,  
PlugScale

### Problem Context

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence has introduced new efficiencies into hiring processes. At the same time, it has created new vulnerabilities. The emergence of AI-generated resumes, deepfake interviews, and scripted responses has raised concerns around authenticity and signal integrity in candidate evaluation.

Concurrently, talent acquisition teams are required to manage increasing application volumes while maintaining fairness, regulatory compliance, and speed. This dual pressure has made shortlisting and interviewing significantly more complex. Within this context, Team 2 examined a central question: How can organizations shortlist and interview at scale without compromising trust, fairness, or talent quality?



## Key Observations

The cohort identified a set of emerging risks shaping modern hiring environments. These included:

- AI-generated fake profiles and interview manipulation
- Erosion of authentic behavioral and intent signals
- Increasing regulatory scrutiny, including compliance considerations aligned with the EU AI Act.
- Recruiter fatigue and burnout resulting from high-volume screening
- Continued attrition despite rigorous shortlisting processes

The team observed that while automation has improved throughput, it has not consistently strengthened signal reliability or long-term retention outcomes. As volume increases, trust mechanisms must evolve accordingly.



## Proposed Framework Shift

To address these concerns, Team 2 proposed a trust-first hiring architecture designed to embed verification, fairness, and predictive insight directly into the shortlisting and interviewing process. Key elements of the proposed model include:

- AI-powered fraud detection mechanisms, including biometrics, liveness verification, and deepfake detection
- Behavioral analytics integrated within interview workflows
- Skills-based hiring approaches using simulations and real-world assessments
- Bias-audited and explainable AI decision models
- Hybrid AI and human structured interview formats
- Predictive retention intelligence to proactively address early attrition risks

This framework seeks to balance scale with governance, ensuring that efficiency gains do not undermine authenticity or compliance.

## Expected Impact

The proposed architecture is designed to significantly reduce fraudulent profiles, improve the authenticity and reliability of shortlisted candidates, and establish transparent, auditable hiring workflows aligned with evolving global compliance standards. By embedding trust mechanisms into the core evaluation process, the model strengthens both short-term hiring accuracy and long-term workforce stability.



## 2. Candidate Experience for Today's Talent (Runners-Up)



Click here to watch!

Moderated by:

**Kaimal Vinoo** 

Senior Director - Head Talent Acquisition and HR services, Sapiens

## Problem Context

In an increasingly competitive talent market, candidate experience has emerged as a critical differentiator. However, despite significant investments in sourcing and screening technologies, experience delivery across the hiring lifecycle remains inconsistent.

In an increasingly competitive talent market, candidate experience has emerged as a critical differentiator. However, despite significant investments in sourcing and screening technologies, experience delivery across the hiring lifecycle remains inconsistent.



## Key Observations

The cohort identified structural experience gaps across multiple stages of the hiring journey:

- Incubation and outreach stages
- Interview coordination and communication
- Offer-stage engagement
- Onboarding transition

The team observed that inconsistent communication, delayed updates, and limited visibility into application status weaken candidate trust. Disconnected touchpoints across stages further compound the issue, directly affecting conversion rates and overall employer perception.



## Proposed Framework Shift

To address these challenges, Team 3 proposed the development of a unified candidate engagement ecosystem designed to integrate technology enablement with structured human interaction.

Key components of the proposed model include:

- Technology-enabled sourcing with transparent, real-time status communication
- AI-driven screening and stack ranking to ensure consistency and speed
- Recruiter enablement focused on structured, bias-aware candidate interactions.
- Offer-stage engagement tools, including contextual content, Net Promoter Score (NPS) signals, and real-time communication mechanisms
- A dedicated candidate-facing application interface providing end-to-end visibility across all stages of the hiring journey.

This framework positions engagement not as a series of isolated interactions, but as a continuous and integrated experience.



## Expected Impact

The proposed solution reframes hiring as a structured customer journey. By strengthening communication transparency and engagement continuity, the model aims to improve candidate trust, enhance conversion rates, and reduce drop-offs across critical stages of the talent lifecycle.

# 3. Candidate Sourcing – Challenges & Opportunities



Click here to watch!

Moderated by:

**Balaji Kamaraj** 

VP & Global Head – Talent Acquisition, Creative Synergies Group

## Problem Context

As organizations pursue expansion and transformation agendas, hiring volumes have increased significantly. However, the mechanisms used to source talent have not evolved at the same pace. While application inflow continues to grow, signal quality does not scale proportionately. Recruiters are therefore required to manage resume overload, rely heavily on keyword-based filtering, and make early decisions with limited visibility into candidate intent.

Within this context, Team 1 examined a central question: How can organizations maintain sourcing quality while scaling hiring volume?



## Key Observations

The cohort identified structural limitations within prevailing sourcing models. These included exponential hiring demands coupled with over-reliance on keyword-driven screening approaches. Multi-channel sourcing strategies were observed to generate volume but not necessarily differentiated signal.

Manual screening processes continue to dominate early-stage filtering, contributing to recruiter bandwidth constraints. Additionally, traditional sourcing mechanisms lack the ability to assess candidate intent at the pre-application stage. As a result, high-potential passive candidates are frequently obscured within large applicant pools, reducing overall sourcing effectiveness.

Collectively, these factors create a high-effort, low-signal sourcing environment that struggles to balance scale with quality.



## Proposed Framework Shift

To address these structural gaps, the team proposed transitioning from resume-heavy, manual sourcing approaches to an AI-augmented sourcing ecosystem. The recommended shift includes:

- Deployment of agentic AI bots to automate sourcing across channels
- Introduction of pre-application intent filtering through conversational AI interfaces
- Adoption of semantic skill and contextual matching in place of keyword dependency
- Integration of AI-driven early-stage conversational interviews
- Development of pre-interviewed, signal-validated talent pools

This model reframes sourcing from a volume-processing exercise to a structured signal-validation process.



## Expected Impact

The proposed approach is designed to reduce resume noise, enhance recruiter bandwidth utilization, and enable scalable hiring without compromising sourcing quality. By prioritizing intent and contextual fit over keyword frequency, the emphasis shifts toward signal intelligence and early-stage validation, thereby strengthening the overall talent pipeline.

## 4. Seamless Onboarding for Predictable Success



Click here to watch!

Moderated by:

**Pushpa Latha** 

Head of HR and TA, Vymo

## Problem Context

While considerable focus is placed on sourcing and selection, hiring effectiveness ultimately depends on what occurs after offer acceptance. Many organizations experience inconsistencies during the transition from post-offer engagement to the first 90 days of employment. These gaps often result in disengagement, delayed productivity, and increased early attrition. Within this context, Team 4 examined a critical question: How can organizations create a structured, predictable onboarding journey from offer acceptance through the first 90 days?



## Key Observations

The cohort identified several breakdowns that undermine onboarding effectiveness:

- Gaps in post-offer communication and engagement
- Weak ownership clarity between Talent Acquisition, HR, and business stakeholders
- Delays in IT provisioning and system access readiness
- Absence of structured 30–60–90 day onboarding plans
- Limited leadership visibility and involvement after the date of joining

The team observed that onboarding often operates as a series of fragmented actions rather than a coordinated, milestone-driven process. This lack of structure affects both employee confidence and organizational alignment during the critical early tenure period.



# Proposed Framework Shift

To address these issues, Team 4 recommended establishing a structured onboarding architecture grounded in defined ownership and planned engagement. The proposed model includes:

- Clear stage-wise ownership mapping across TA, HR, and business stakeholders
- Early cross-functional alignment among HR, Business, and IT teams
- Pre-defined 30–60–90 day milestone plans to guide integration and performance ramp-up
- Buddy programs and structured leadership connects to strengthen early engagement
- Planned check-ins and defined engagement cadences
- Early background verification (BGV) initiation supported by proactive communication

This framework emphasizes predictability, accountability, and coordinated execution across all onboarding stages.



## Expected Impact

A structured onboarding model is intended to enhance role clarity, accelerate productivity, and strengthen employee engagement during the first 90 days. By formalizing ownership and engagement mechanisms, organizations can reduce first-year attrition risk and improve overall integration outcomes.

# Jury Evaluation



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to watch!

Jury Members:

**Sangeeta Nanamanda Ponnappa** 

**Balaji Mahalingam Srinivasan** 

The Thinkathon presentations were evaluated by seasoned talent leaders **Sangeeta Nanamanda Ponnappa** and **Balaji Mahalingam Srinivasan** (Head of TA & Talent Attraction, Bosch Limited), who reflected on the relevance and quality of the discussions across all four themes.

Sangeeta observed that the topics explored – spanning sourcing, interviewing, candidate experience, and onboarding – closely mirrored the realities faced by talent acquisition teams today. She highlighted the value of the candid discussions, noting that the collective acknowledgment of shared challenges reinforced the importance of collaborative problem-solving within the industry. She also emphasized the potential for several ideas discussed during the sessions to evolve into **replicable approaches for enterprise hiring environments**.

Balaji Mahalingam commended the **structured storytelling and clarity of the cohort presentations**, highlighting the depth of preparation and the thoughtful responses to the jury's questions. He noted that evaluating the presentations was itself a valuable learning experience, reflecting the **quality of insight and practical orientation** demonstrated across the solution frameworks.

# re:Imagine '26

## Panel Discussions

### 1. Boardroom Expectations on Talent Functions in the current context

Moderator



**Rajesh Mishra**

Partner,  
KPMG

Panelist



**Raja Vasudevan**

Global Head, Talent  
Acquisition, Finastra

Panelist



**Balaji Mahalingam**

Head Talent Acquisition,  
Bosch India

Panelist



**Magesh Sambasivan**

VP - People Organisation,  
Assurant

### Panel Overview

This panel explored how boardroom expectations from talent acquisition have fundamentally evolved. Moving beyond traditional metrics like time-to-fill, the discussion centered on ROI, workforce intelligence, global talent strategy, AI adoption, and the transformation of recruiters into strategic talent partners. The conversation reflected a clear shift: talent is no longer an operational support function – it is a strategic growth lever.

### Key Discussion Points

#### 1. From Time-to-Fill to Talent Intelligence

Boardrooms today expect deeper insight into workforce capability – not just hiring speed. Leaders emphasized understanding internal skill availability, future preparedness, cross-industry talent mobility, and global hiring readiness. Talent teams are now expected to influence location strategy, university partnerships, and long-term capability planning.

## 2. AI Adoption: Beyond Automation to Transformation

The panel stressed that technology implementation must not replicate outdated manual processes. Successful adoption requires purpose clarity, change management, and cross-functional alignment. AI should optimize and redesign workflows – not merely digitize inefficiencies. ROI is measured not only in cost reduction but also in productivity, candidate experience, and strategic impact.

[Click here to watch!](#)



## 3. The Evolution from Recruiter to Talent Partner

A significant theme was the need for recruiters to evolve into business-embedded talent advisors. The discussion highlighted that future-ready talent professionals must influence compensation strategy, workforce planning, and skills development. Those who fail to adapt risk redundancy; those who embrace AI and strategic capability will elevate their impact.

## 4. Globalization of Talent Strategy

Hiring is no longer geography-bound. Organizations increasingly expect talent teams to source globally, identify skill clusters across markets, and operate as a unified interface – rather than siloed regional units. Talent acquisition now contributes directly to global expansion and competitive positioning.

## Final Reflections

The discussion underscored a defining reality: AI will not replace talent professionals – but those who leverage it strategically will reshape the function. Boardroom expectations now prioritize capability over capacity, productivity over activity, and measurable business impact over transactional output. Talent acquisition is no longer a support engine; it is a strategic growth driver.

## 2. Beyond the Hype – Implementing AI in Enterprise Talent Functions

Moderator



**Mohit Sharma**

Global Head Talent Acquisition, KPMG

Panelist



**Saurav Lenka**

CEO, ObjectWin Technology India

Panelist



**Vikas Baghel**

Associate Director - Talent Supply Chain & HR Technology, HCLTech

Panelist



**Anupam Shrivastava**

Head of HR, Global Product & Tech, Global Talent Acquisition, Reltlio

### Panel Overview

This panel shifted the conversation from AI enthusiasm to enterprise execution. While AI continues to dominate strategic discussions, large organizations face a far more complex challenge: translating intent into scalable, compliant, and value-generating implementation.

The discussion focused on practical barriers – cultural resistance, data readiness, integration complexity, stakeholder alignment, and ROI measurement – emphasizing that AI success in talent functions requires disciplined orchestration, not experimentation alone.

### Key Discussion Points

#### 1. From Intent to Implementation: The Cultural Reality

Despite strong intent, enterprise AI adoption often stalls due to cultural and structural resistance rather than technology. Organizations often try to automate outdated workflows instead of redesigning them. Without clear roles, disciplined data practices, and strong business leadership sponsorship, AI remains stuck in pilot mode instead of driving real transformation.

#### 2. Solving the Right Problem: Clarity Before Capability

A key theme was defining the right problem before adopting AI. It should be deployed to solve a clear business outcome, not simply because the technology is available. Leaders also stressed distinguishing automation from intelligence. AI should augment recruiter judgment, enable better decisions, and surface insights – not just speed up inefficient processes.

Click here  
to watch!



### **3. Data, Integration & Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)**

Enterprise AI success depends on backend readiness. Fragmented data, siloed HR systems, and weak governance often delay value realization. Leaders stressed evaluating Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) – including integration, compliance, training, and change management – rather than focusing only on licensing costs.

### **4. Value Realization & Business Ownership**

Successful AI deployment does not automatically deliver measurable value. ROI must be defined upfront through efficiency metrics, cost impact, adoption rates, and alignment with business outcomes. The panel emphasized positioning AI as a business transformation initiative – not just an HR-led technology rollout.

## **Final Reflections**

AI implementation in talent functions is not a technology challenge – it is an enterprise transformation exercise. Organizations that define precise business problems, align stakeholders early, strengthen data foundations, and embed accountability for ROI will move beyond experimentation to sustainable value creation. AI in talent acquisition succeeds not through hype, but through disciplined execution, cultural readiness, and business ownership.

# 3. GCCs Scaling with Domain-Centric Talent

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## Panel Overview

As Global Capability Centers (GCCs) enter their next phase of evolution, the focus is no longer limited to scale. The conversation has shifted toward building deep, domain-centric capability that drives enterprise-wide transformation. This panel examined how GCCs can move beyond cost arbitrage and position themselves as innovation engines, capability hubs, and strategic counterparts to global headquarters.

## Key Discussion Points

### 1. From Scale to Capability

GCCs are moving from people-based expansion to capability-led growth. Organizations increasingly expect these centers to operate like a second headquarters, owning end-to-end charters and influencing global strategy. The focus is shifting from headcount to delivering strategic outcomes and innovation.

### 2. Domain Depth + Functional Excellence

Panelists emphasized combining domain expertise with strong technological and functional capabilities. In sectors like pharmaceuticals and life sciences, scientific understanding is critical to driving meaningful innovation. The talent model is shifting toward “X-shaped” professionals who integrate domain knowledge, technology, and business decision-making.

### 3. Data, Integration & Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)

Organizations must move beyond pedigree and narrow skill labels to assess cognitive ability, systems thinking, and leadership potential. Hiring should prioritize long-term capability and deep problem-solving ability rather than checklist-based screening.



#### 4. Value Realization & Business Ownership

To attract high-impact talent, GCCs must communicate more than job roles. Culture, meaningful problem-solving, and opportunities to build globally relevant solutions are key differentiators. Talent increasingly prioritizes ownership, autonomy, and outcome influence over traditional employment structures.

#### 5. University & Ecosystem Partnerships

Building sustainable talent pipelines requires stronger partnerships with Tier 2 and Tier 3 institutions. Apprenticeship models and assessments focused on cognitive ability can help bridge the industry-academia gap. Capability development must be a shared responsibility between enterprises and the broader ecosystem.

## Final Reflections

GCCs are no longer peripheral delivery arms; they are emerging as strategic capability centers.

The future lies in:

- Hiring leaders, not just operators
- Building domain-integrated, innovation-led talent pools
- Shifting from cost efficiency to value creation
- Positioning the GCC as a true global counterpart, not a support function

The defining differentiator will not be scale alone — but the depth, leadership strength, and transformational capability embedded within the talent ecosystem.

# Conclusion

**re:Imagine '26** reinforced a defining reality: the future of talent will be shaped less by incremental process improvements and more by **structural transformation in how organizations design, deploy, and govern talent systems**. Across the Thinkathon, keynotes, and panel dialogues, leaders converged on a common theme – talent functions must evolve from reactive hiring engines to **proactive architects of organizational capability**.

Three structural shifts emerged consistently across the discussions:

- **From measuring activity to measuring impact** – shifting focus from hiring volume and cycle times to capability outcomes and business contribution.
- **From scaling headcount to building differentiated capability** – prioritizing specialized expertise, leadership depth, and domain-driven talent strategies.
- **From digitizing processes to intelligently redesigning them** – using AI and data to rethink hiring architecture rather than simply automate existing workflows.

AI, globalized work, and shifting workforce expectations are collectively redefining how organizations build and sustain talent. As a result, talent acquisition, GCC leadership, and HR are becoming more strategic. Hyreo will continue to drive industry dialogue and translate these insights into product innovation and research through HyreoLabs.



# The Way Forward

The discussions across re:Imagine '26 point toward several priorities for organizations seeking to future-proof their talent strategies:

## 1. Design Talent as an Integrated System

Talent sourcing, candidate experience, onboarding, and workforce planning must operate as a **connected architecture rather than fragmented workflows**, enabling greater visibility and strategic alignment.

## 2. Embed AI with Purpose and Governance

AI adoption must be anchored in **clear outcomes, responsible implementation frameworks, and measurable ROI**, ensuring technology enhances decision-making rather than simply adding complexity.

## 3. Invest in Domain-Centric Capability Building

Organizations that combine **industry expertise, technological fluency, and leadership depth** will be best positioned to build sustainable competitive advantage.

## 4. Strengthen Ecosystem Collaboration

Long-term capability development will require deeper collaboration across **enterprises, technology providers, and academic institutions**, enabling more resilient talent pipelines.

## 5. Elevate Talent Functions to Strategic Partner Status

Future-ready organizations will embed talent leaders in **boardroom conversations, growth strategy discussions, and global expansion planning**, reflecting the strategic role talent plays in enterprise performance.

Ultimately, re:Imagine '26 served not merely as a forum for discussion but as an industry signal of the direction talent strategy is taking. The collective insight is clear: sustainable success will belong to organizations that intentionally design their talent ecosystems for intelligence, accountability, and long-term capability creation. The next phase of progress will be defined not by dialogue alone, but by disciplined execution of these ideas at scale.

# Acknowledgments

**re:Imagine '26** was made possible through the collective contributions of industry leaders, practitioners, and ecosystem partners who brought depth of experience and forward-looking perspectives to the discussions.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the moderators and panelists whose insights shaped the dialogue across critical themes including boardroom expectations, the evolution of GCCs, AI adoption in talent acquisition, candidate experience, and onboarding transformation. Their willingness to share real-world perspectives and operational lessons significantly enriched the quality of the conversations.

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Finally, we acknowledge the team at **HyreoLabs** for conceptualizing and executing a platform designed not only to convene conversations but also to translate industry dialogue into actionable progress.

The journey continues, and we look forward to building the next chapter together.



# About Hyreo

Hyreo is an Agentic AI recruiting platform designed to transform end-to-end talent acquisition. Its AI agents autonomously manage sourcing, screening, engagement, interview coordination, and post-offer workflows – enabling faster hiring, consistent evaluation, and measurable productivity gains. Hyreo replaces fragmented processes with a unified, intelligence-driven talent architecture built for enterprise scale.

HyreoLabs is the strategic ideation engine behind the platform – bringing together talent leaders and practitioners to shape forward-looking solutions grounded in real-world challenges.

Reimagine your talent strategy with Agentic AI: [Book a Demo](#)

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